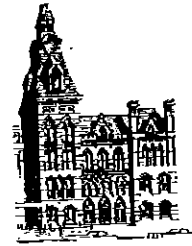




John DeStefano, Jr.  
Mayor

**CITY OF NEW HAVEN  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
165 Church Street, New Haven, CT 06510  
Phone (203)-946-8200, Fax (203)-946-7683



**Testimony of the City of New Haven  
Before the Judiciary Committee**

*In Support of*  
**H.B. 6659 AN ACT CONCERNING CIVIL IMMIGRATION DETAINERS**

*Submitted by*  
**Lieutenant Holly Wasilewski, New Haven Police Department**  
March 22, 2013

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, members of the committee, thank-you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 6659 An Act Concerning Civil Immigration Detainers – the “Trust Act”.

Our department has worked hard to establish trust with all residents in the Community. In 2006, we implemented General Order 06-2 a formal policy meant to encourage all residents, regardless of immigration status, to feel comfortable reporting crime and talking with the police. This order has helped to create a sense of trust, and we have seen people come out of the shadows, actively engage law enforcement and as partners have worked to lower crime in our neighborhoods.

Last year the Secure Communities or “S-Comm” Program went live in Connecticut undermining the efforts we had made, creating fear in much of the immigrant community. The program reminded many in our communities of raids conducted by ICE in 2007 when 29 individuals were detained two days after the City implemented its Resident ID Card. At that time we saw individuals keep kids home from school, stay home from work and withdraw from interactions with police. While the trust we have established within the immigrant community has helped to keep lines of communication open with many immigrants in our community following the implementation of S-Comm, some members of the community were again fearful of the police.

This bill will work to help re-establish trust by encouraging the Department of Corrections (DOC), Judicial Marshals – who happen to manage the lockup in New Haven – and local law enforcement to exercise discretion and only comply with ICE requests when a criminal suspect is convicted of felony under Connecticut law, thereby setting a uniform standard for all law enforcement and bringing participation in the program back to its original goals.

The S-Comm program has only created barriers between residents and police. We urge passage of HB 6659 which will go a long way toward restoring trust between local law enforcement and immigrant communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.